



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Ysgol Gymraeg Llangennech

**Llangennech
Llanelli
SA14 8YB**

Date of inspection: March 2022

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gymraeg Llangennech

Name of provider	YSGOL GYMRAEG LLANGENNECH
Local authority	Carmarthenshire
Language of the provider	Welsh-medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	420
Pupils of statutory school age	300
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	75
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	10.2%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 20.6%)</i>	32%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	29.7%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	28-03-2022
Additional information	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

(a) The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Ysgol Gymraeg Llangennech is a happy, caring learning community in which pupils make good progress. They develop robust oral skills and speak naturally with their peers and staff. Most pupils read confidently, in line with their age and stage of development, and write successfully in different contexts. Their numeracy and digital skills are sound and they apply them skilfully during activities. Pupils enjoy investigating when discovering information in their local habitat, for example when learning about the train route along the Heart of Wales railway, which travels through Llangennech.

Practitioners provide all pupils with highly effective support. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life through different pupil voice groups. This has influenced the school's work in the community, locally and more widely when looking at global events. Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and persevere exceptionally well during their activities. They are extremely polite with each other and with adults.

The school provides a broad and rich curriculum that is adapted continuously while preparing and planning for the Curriculum for Wales. There is a strong working relationship between pupils and staff, and teachers and assistants facilitate learning skilfully. They have high expectations of pupils, but at times they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to make decisions for themselves, for example when choosing the level of challenge in their activities.

The headteachers and leaders share a clear vision to provide a well-rounded education based on maintaining pupils' wellbeing and challenging them to aim for the highest possible standards. Staff evaluate progress in all aspects of school life successfully and identify areas for improvement wisely.

Recommendations

- R1 Develop opportunities to enable pupils to make decisions in relation to their learning.
- R2 Ensure that learning experiences provide an appropriate level of challenge to enable all pupils to make the best progress and develop their learning fully.

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils have skills that correspond to what is expected for their age, except in Welsh, which is lower than expected.

Nearly all pupils make sound progress throughout their time at the school and a minority make very strong progress. Pupils, including those with additional learning needs, develop increasing confidence, gain independence and persevere successfully with their learning activities.

From the outset, most pupils in the nursery and reception classes talk happily with their friends. They develop robust physical skills while playing together in the different areas of provision. They develop effective balance and co-ordination while learning movements for a folk dance. Most persevere well while solving the problem of how to create a small train and ensure that there is plenty of space for all of the travellers. They develop fine motor skills effectively while making animals from clay and decorating them. Many pupils recognise numbers to 10 and apply their skills when counting animals in the train carriages and counting stamps in the post office. Most have a good understanding of the properties of different simple shapes. Many have sound early reading skills. They recognise letters, phrases and words and develop early writing skills competently while playing with mark-making implements. A majority of the oldest pupils in the reception class write their names independently and confidently and enjoy researching while creating simple sentences.

Most pupils' oral Welsh skills are sound across the school. Pupils listen attentively to each other when discussing. They express themselves confidently and use the area's dialect and vocabulary naturally with their friends during lessons, break times and lunchtimes. Many pupils in Year 1 and 2 enjoy discussing the characters in a story, such as *'Yr Iâr Fach Goch'* ('The Little Red Hen'), enthusiastically.

Most pupils in Year 4 recite a story, such as *'Merch Llyn y Fan Fach'* ('The Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach'), confidently with their peers. They enjoy characterising and use signs to remind them about different parts of the story when describing the girl in detail. Many Year 6 pupils discuss the Aberfan tragedy extremely maturely and use their ideas to create very poignant and effective poems. Most pupils' oral Welsh skills in the English stream are developing soundly and they have a good understanding of the area's Welshness and culture.

Most pupils at the top of the foundation phase read with increasing confidence, adapt their tone of voice effectively and cope intelligently with new words. They discuss their liking of factual and fictional books maturely. They are able to find information and use it to enrich their work in other contexts.

A majority of the older pupils read increasingly challenging texts confidently in both Welsh and English. Many pupils at the top of the school read beyond the text and demonstrate higher-order skills, such as skimming, and refer to elements of the text to support their opinions on the characters.

Many pupils apply their writing skills successfully. They show a good awareness of the importance of elements of punctuation and accuracy when spelling. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 create touching portrayals of their friends and use similes to support their work. Many of the older pupils write effectively in a range of factual and creative contexts. For example, they create a detailed report following their trip to the national botanic garden describing how the pharmacist would create herbal medicines many years ago to treat various ailments.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing well across the school. They apply their skills in different practical contexts that demonstrate their understanding successfully. For example, many pupils in Year 2 are able to select different weights to balance the scales with a toy and explain how to create a total of 35 grams using 20-, 10- and 5-gram pieces. Many pupils in Year 4 use a computer program confidently to create a database of different types of trains as part of their theme work. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 conduct a detailed survey of the different birds that can be seen on the school grounds and use this information to create and interpret graphs.

Many pupils investigate skilfully when solving problems. For example, many pupils in Year 3 work well together when investigating which objects sink and float and the effect of upthrust on the objects. Many pupils show effective creativity, for example when emulating the work of different artists.

Many pupils apply their digital skills skilfully. They log into their accounts confidently to access their work. Many pupils in Year 2 create presentations that include elements of animation and add a voiceover that accompanies the story. They use computer equipment to record and evaluate their work. Many older pupils make mature choices about the most effective equipment and software to use for different purposes. They use green screen equipment and QR codes to present their work in the most effective manner.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils arrive at school happy and talk enthusiastically about their learning. In classes and around the school, they are extremely polite and respectful towards each other, staff, and visitors. They hold doors open for visitors and greet them in a friendly manner while walking around the school. This is a very exceptional feature of the school. Pupils move around the school calmly, methodically and speak confidently with adults in various situations. Nearly all pupils behave excellently in lessons and on the playing fields. They feel safe at the school and know with whom to talk if they need support. Nearly all pupils have a sound awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe online.

Nearly all pupils settle quickly in lessons and most concentrate exceptionally well for extended periods. They show perseverance and resilience when completing tasks. They understand the importance of maintaining positive attitudes to their work and how this will help them to overcome challenges in their learning. They work with their peers in pairs or groups to solve problems without support from adults, for example when using the 'three before me' strategy. As a result, nearly all pupils develop as independent learners.

Most pupils have a strong understanding of the need to keep fit and eat healthily. They explain why it is beneficial to eat fruit during play times, for example, and why it is not sensible to drink sugary drinks. Across the school, nearly all pupils appreciate the importance of regular exercise and enjoy taking part in daily fitness sessions. Pupils show enthusiasm in physical education lessons and many enjoy the extra-curricular activities that are provided by the school.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many speak confidently about the 'right of the month' and what it means to them. Nearly all respect the environment and understand how their decisions and choices affect it. Most pupils show empathy towards others and are keen to support those who are in need, for example by organising an activity to raise money to help people in Ukraine.

A variety of pupil voice groups are active across the school. They show a clear understanding of their responsibilities and play an important part in making decisions that have a significant effect on the school's daily life. The school council raised money to improve resources in the foundation phase outdoor area to enrich learning and play experiences. The fairtrade council's work ensures that most pupils have a strong awareness of sustainable trade relationships. For example, members of this group created posters to raise awareness and encourage more families to consider their choices when food shopping.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, learning experiences promote the school's vision very well. Teachers provide a stimulating and imaginative curriculum that develops pupils' skills effectively. They have begun to revise schemes of work in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales and provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills in authentic contexts. This has a very positive effect on most pupils' motivation, commitment, and achievement. The curriculum is enriched effectively by conducting educational visits to places of interest and by using visitors' expertise. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own learning, such as discussing their ideas openly before starting on new themes. As a result, they show enthusiasm and interest in all aspects of their work.

Teachers plan together effectively to ensure consistency and progression across the years and this is a strong element of provision. They plan learning opportunities that provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop and apply elements of literacy, numeracy, and digital competence skilfully across the curriculum. For example, as part of their work on '*Fuoch chi erioed ar hyd Cledrau Calon Cymru*' ('Have you ever been along the Heart of Wales line?') and following a visit to the Botanic Garden, older pupils have used an electronic planning program to build an Apothecary Hall. They use their knowledge of the properties of herbs that improve specific conditions to create their own medicines. In the school's younger classes, there is a suitable combination of first-hand learning and good opportunities for pupils to practise and apply skills independently in the learning areas. Pupils have regular access to the outdoor areas and benefit greatly from interesting activities both inside and outside the classroom. A notable example is pupils counting different animals around the playground and recording their findings on a tally chart and using them to create a bar graph. Although teachers across the school provide valuable opportunities to

pupils to work independently on specific tasks, there are not enough opportunities for them to make decisions in relation to their learning.

Most teachers and assistants model the Welsh language effectively and take advantage of every opportunity to enrich pupils' language, which makes a beneficial contribution to developing their oral skills. The school's strong Welsh ethos, alongside provision, encourages pupils to make purposeful use of the Welsh language in all aspects of school life. As a result, they develop as competent, bilingual learners. Provision for pupils who are taught in the English stream provides rich opportunities for them to develop their awareness of their area's culture and Welshness.

All staff have a highly effective working relationship with pupils, which fosters a positive and supportive environment for learning. They use various questioning techniques effectively to extend pupils' understanding. Nearly all teachers ensure that their lessons have an effective pace and encourage pupils to work together to complete tasks and solve problems. They set clear learning objectives and use a range of interesting resources to engage pupils' interest and support learning. This enables pupils to use their previous knowledge and thinking skills effectively when completing tasks. Across the school, teachers plan learning experiences that have been planned carefully to meet pupils' needs appropriately. However, they do not always tailor experiences to ensure a suitable level of challenge to enable all pupils to make the best progress and develop their learning in full.

Teachers and learning assistants provide pupils with constructive feedback so that they understand how to improve their work, particularly orally. They use information from assessments to plan the next steps in pupils' learning appropriately.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring and inclusive community that values all learners and adults. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of respect and care, and this has a very positive influence on pupils' attitudes. All staff contribute purposefully to developing a caring ethos at the school. For example, they hold daily discussions with pupils to check their wellbeing and willingness to learn. There is clear respect between pupils and staff and this contributes towards creating a highly effective working relationship.

There are successful procedures in place to track and monitor pupils' progress. Staff identify the pupils that could benefit from additional support at an early stage. They provide a purposeful variety of interventions that support these pupils to make valuable progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and improving their wellbeing. For example, individual support for pupils with emotional needs help them to develop their self-respect successfully. The additional learning needs coordinators use meetings with teachers and assistants to evaluate the effect of this support carefully. Together, they set useful steps for improvement that enable pupils to continue to make sound progress. The school works very effectively with specialist agencies, for example to support pupils at 'Y Fesen Fach' who have profound and complex additional learning needs.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to be active during the school day, for example as sports ambassadors who promote playground games during break time. The school provides a wide variety of extra-curricular sports activities that help pupils to develop a sound understanding of the importance of physical exercise to their health.

Staff provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to play an active part in making decisions about developing different aspects of the school's provision. All classes use an ideas box to express their views to the school council. An example of the effect of this is pupils deciding to bake and sell cakes to raise money for Noah's Ark Children's Hospital.

The school creates links with the community successfully and teachers enrich pupils' learning beneficially. For example, pupils went to pick litter on Pembrey beach as part of the 'change' theme. The school has held '*cawl a chân*' evenings for the community to support pupils to develop their use of oral Welsh and their social and creative skills.

The school provides beneficial opportunities to develop pupils' moral and spiritual understanding during assemblies and classroom activities. By conducting mental health weeks, the school ensures that nearly all pupils develop a sound understanding of how to reduce stress and anxiety. All staff support pupils to develop a strong awareness of right and wrong and promote respect towards the school community. As a result, nearly all pupils respect the school's rules and make sensible decisions.

There is a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to take part in performances at the school and in the local community. For example, pupils are given an opportunity to perform in the Ysgol Llangennech 'silly' eisteddfod every year. Performances include pupils dancing, telling jokes, singing or taking part in performances of their choice.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding and clear monitoring arrangements. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have led the school highly effectively through a number of large changes over recent years. They have worked very closely as a team in a genial way to amalgamate two schools, change the school's language and to lead the school through the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout all of this, they have promoted the wellbeing of pupils and staff particularly well and there is clear respect between pupils and staff. They have also succeeded in ensuring high quality learning experiences to pupils and have supported and developed pupils' skills effectively.

The headteacher and leaders set a clear strategic direction for the school. This is based firmly on their vision to provide a happy environment for pupils and staff to inspire individuals to perform well. All staff have an effective understanding of their roles and responsibilities and implement them conscientiously. Leaders have recently established a new structure that enables staff to work together in triads across the

school. This has strengthened staff's understanding well of pupils' development in particular areas as they move through the school.

The school has valuable arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. One of the strengths of this process is the continuous ethos of reflecting on aspects of the school's work, particularly the quality of teaching and the curriculum. This is done through discussions in staff meetings and triads, scrutinising work and recently when beginning to resume the process of observations and learning walks. Leaders use all the information skilfully to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. When evaluating the effect of the pandemic on pupils' skills, for example, there was a deterioration in pupils' oral skills. As a result, leaders have allocated time for specialists to meet to create a specific oracy scheme for the school. Use of the '*Sgwrsio Sionc*' scheme has had a positive effect on pupils' linguistic accuracy and confidence when discussing in Welsh across the school. The main priorities for improvement are included in the school improvement plan, which includes appropriate actions and success criteria.

The headteacher and governors manage the school's funding effectively. They make purposeful use of the pupil development grant, for example, to ensure that specific pupils have access to appropriate intervention in their classes.

Leaders address local and national priorities skilfully. Alongside pupils, staff, governors and the wider community, they have created a clear vision to develop the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders provide valuable opportunities for staff to begin to experiment with different approaches to delivering the curriculum, such as providing purposeful opportunities for pupils to reinforce their skills across the curriculum. Leaders have a clear focus on creating a Welsh culture within the school and there are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh skills and opportunities for them to learn about, and take pride in, their heritage.

Leaders ensure beneficial opportunities for staff to develop professionally. For example, by establishing the 'Y Fesen Fach' class, staff have benefitted greatly from training to develop a specific curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils in the class. As part of the transition progress, support staff have benefitted greatly from access to courses to develop their Welsh language skills. This has had a positive effect on their linguistic skills and their confidence in using the language.

Governors are very supportive of the school's work and fulfil their statutory roles conscientiously. They use their expertise shrewdly to support the school on different committees. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and use their knowledge skilfully to provide an appropriate challenge to leaders. Governors ensure that the school has effective arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily.

There is a productive relationship between the school and parents. Leaders use the school 'app' to inform parents about events regularly. Leaders consider the views of parents and carers effectively through questionnaires and the work of the parents' forum. For example, the parents' forum provides a valuable opportunity for parents to have input into the school's policies and give their views on a variety of issues. Findings and the actions that the school takes to address issues that arise from these meetings are shared through newsletters.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).